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Darker Side of U.S.-Israeli Ties Revealed

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WASHINGTON, June 4 — Relations between United States and Israeli intelligence agencies are normally marked by intimate cooperation. But the guilty plea today by Jonathan Jay Pollard, combined with the naming of four Israeli officials as co-conspirators who were not indicted, underlines another facet of the relationship: When the interests of the two nations diverge, they spy on each other.

By all indications the United States has been inclined to forgive the Israelis for the Pollard case, and officials at the White House and elsewhere in the Administration were plainly seeking to treat it as an isolated incident in a remarkably close military and intelligence relationship of more than three decades. Mr. Pollard pleaded guilty to one count of espionage for selling military secrets to the Israelis.

Yet the case has in recent months stirred concern within the White House, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon, the State Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies about the degree to which Israel has been able to obtain sensitive information on United States secret weapons, policy deliberations and advanced technology. The Pollard case itself has left a thread of uncertainty and annoyance among some United States officials.

'Expect Full Cooperation'

"Quite frankly it's too premature to speculate about this because the investigation is continuing," said an Administration official. "But we do expect full cooperation of the Israelis on this."

Asked if the Israelis were fully cooperating, the official replied: "The Israelis are cooperating but we expect full cooperation. Let's leave it at that."

Certainly United States-Israeli intelligence cooperation has been intense since the 1950's and, officials say, ties have grown even closer in recent years with the United States giving Israel access to more reconnaissance satellite data.

The two nations share large amounts of information about terrorism and Soviet activities in the Middle East. The Israelis, for their part, have been

especially useful to the United States in providing captured Soviet-made military equipment after the 1967 and 1973 wars in the Middle East, offering information from countries such as Iran, where the Israelis still have contacts, as well as data on nuclear developments in Pakistan, officials have said.

Beyond this, out of self-interest and mutual need, "U.S. and Israeli intelligence organizations have maintained a discreet arrangement since the 1950's, banning covert operations against each other," wrote Wolf Blitzer, a Washington correspondent of The Jerusalem Post, in his book, "Between Washington and Jerusalem: A Reporter's Notebook." The cooperation between the C.I.A. and the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service, was "so close that the two organizations do not really have to spy on each other."

Both nations are, of course, sovereign. Their respective interests, while rarely colliding, sometimes diverge. The Israelis, for example, have been frustrated by the refusal of the United States to provide certain information on troop deployments by moderate Arab countries, including Jordan and Egypt. Moreover, some Israelis have said that the United States declined to turn over all the intelligence data that would be helpful in protecting Israel.

A classified study by the C.I.A. in 1979 said two of the principal goals of Israeli intelligence were the "collection of information on secret U.S. policy or decisions" concerning Israel and the "collection of scientific intelligence in the United States and other developed countries."

Seeking to obtain scientific and technical intelligence, the report said Israeli agents had made "attempts to penetrate certain classified defense projects in the United States and other western nations." The study did not give examples.

Earlier Spying Cited

The Pollard case is not the only example of Israeli spying to have come to the attention of United States law-enforcement officials. But the case is the first one to be prosecuted. Moreover, the Federal Bureau of Investigation

knew of at least a dozen incidents in which American officials transferred classified information to the Israelis. Raymond W. Wannal Jr., a former assistant director of the bureau, told a reporter late last year. The Justice Department did not prosecute.

At the same time, John Davitt, former chief of the Justice Department's internal security section, said: "When the Pollard case broke, the general media and public perception was that this was the first time this had ever happened. No, that's not true at all. The Israeli intelligence service, when I was in the Justice Department, was the second most active in the United States, to the Soviets."

Mr. Davitt, who left the Justice Department in 1980 after 30 years, said most of the Israeli activity focused on gathering information on Arab coun-

tries. But, he said, "There were instances in which we were targeted."

"They would approach someone in our Government and in our defense industries and seek to obtain classified information," he said.

By all accounts, though, and despite the strains, the intelligence ties between the United States and Israel remain intense, and American officials have praised the skill with which the Israelis have gathered data.

The Israelis, according to some accounts, have even been responsible for providing some historic information. For example, the Israeli agents are widely believed to have obtained and provided to the C.I.A. a copy of the speech in which Nikita S. Khrushchev, then the Soviet leader, denounced Stalin before the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956.